

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

MARVEL COMICS GROUPTM



29
JUNE
02449

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU



ACTION
AS YOU'VE
NEVER SEEN
IT BEFORE!

**FISTS
OF FURY
VERSUS
SLASHING
SWORDS
OF
DEATH!**

**THE RAMPAGE OF
RAZOR-FIST!**



"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: That my name means "The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit," that my body could be forged into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu, and that it might be used for the murder of a man called Dr. Petrie.

"Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu** the most insidiously evil man on earth... and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my *name*."

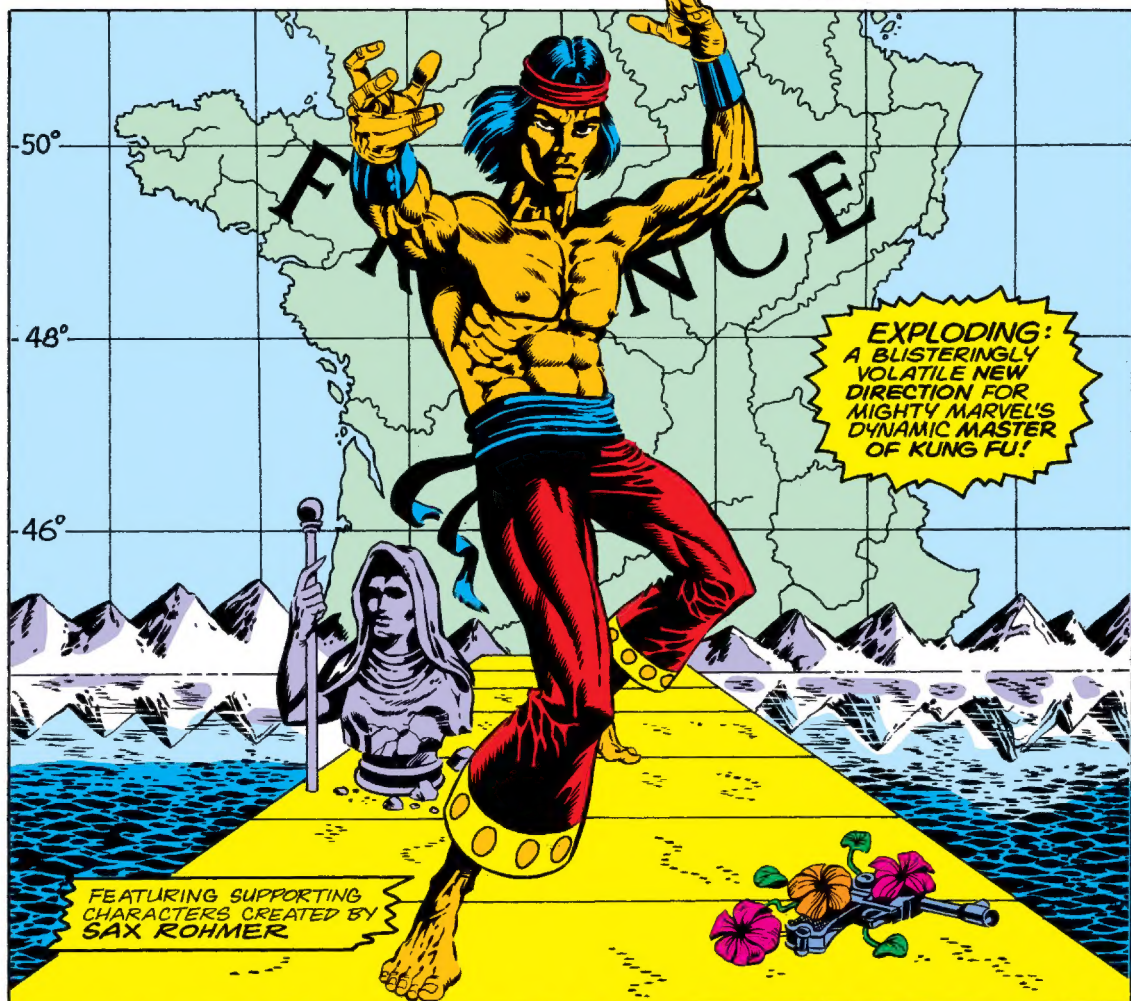
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**™

DOUG MOENCH
writer

PAUL GULACY
artist

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COLORIST

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editor



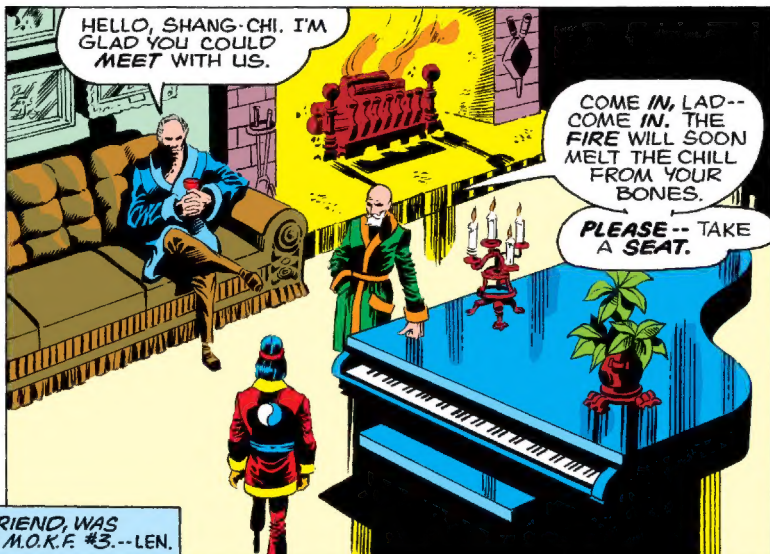
THE CRYSTAL CONNECTION



"NAYLAND SMITH'S TOWNHOUSE
ON CENTRAL PARK WEST...

GOOD EVENING, MASTER
SHANG-CHI. SIR DENIS AND DR.
PETRIE* ARE EXPECTING YOU.
THEY'RE IN THE PARLOR WITH
MASTERS TARR AND
RESTON.

*DR. PETRIE, SMITH'S LIFELONG FRIEND, WAS
DISCOVERED ALIVE IN GIANT-SIZE M.O.K.F. #3.--LEN.



HELLO, SHANG-CHI. I'M
GLAD YOU COULD
MEET WITH US.

COME IN, LAD--
COME IN. THE
FIRE WILL SOON
MELT THE CHILL
FROM YOUR
BONES.

PLEASE-- TAKE
A SEAT.

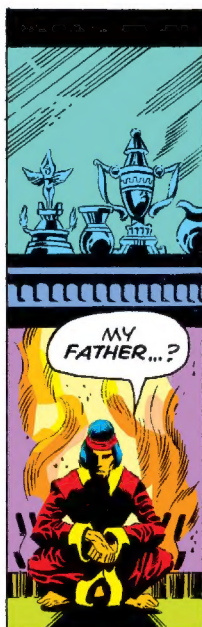


THERE IS
A REASON,
SIR DENIS...

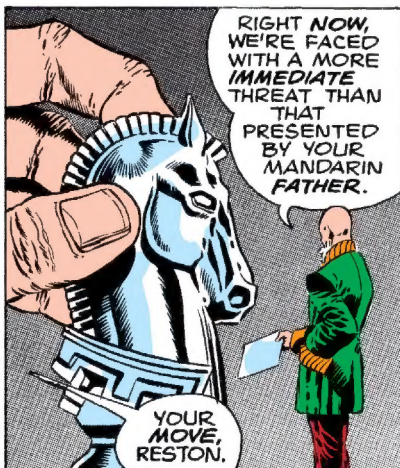
... FOR
ASKING ME
HERE?



THAT THERE IS,
LAD. I WANT YOU
TO HELP US IN
PREVENTING THE
DESTRUCTION OF
COUNTLESS
LIVES...

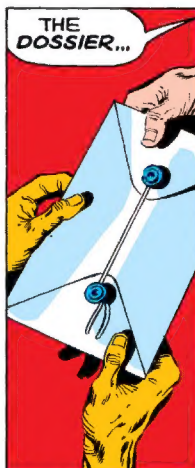


MY
FATHER...?



RIGHT NOW,
WE'RE FACED
WITH A MORE
IMMEDIATE
THREAT THAN
THAT
PRESENTED
BY YOUR MANDARIN
FATHER.

YOUR
MOVE,
RESTON.



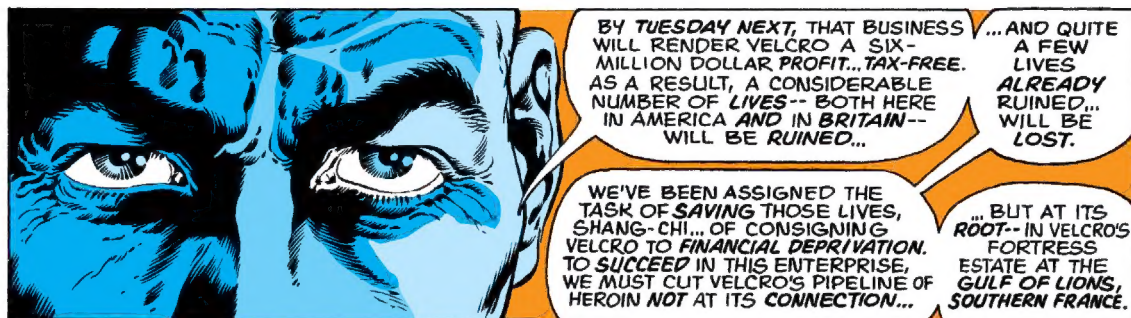
THE
DOSSIER...



"I OPEN THE
ENVELOPE.
THE FACE
OF AN
UNKNOWN
MAN GREET
ME FROM THE
PHOTOGRAPH
WITHIN..."

HIS NAME
IS VELCRO...
CARLTON
VELCRO.

HIS
BUSINESS
IS HEROIN.



BY TUESDAY NEXT, THAT BUSINESS WILL RENDER VELCRO A SIX-MILLION DOLLAR PROFIT... TAX-FREE. AS A RESULT, A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF LIVES-- BOTH HERE IN AMERICA AND IN BRITAIN-- WILL BE RUINED...

...AND QUITE A FEW LIVES ALREADY RUINED... WILL BE LOST.

WE'VE BEEN ASSIGNED THE TASK OF SAVING THOSE LIVES, SHANG-CHI... OF CONSIGNING VELCRO TO FINANCIAL DEPRIVATION. TO SUCCEED IN THIS ENTERPRISE, WE MUST CUT VELCRO'S PIPELINE OF HEROIN NOT AT ITS CONNECTION...

... BUT AT ITS ROOT-- IN VELCRO'S FORTRESS ESTATE AT THE GULF OF LIONS, SOUTHERN FRANCE.



AFRAID I MUST CONCEDE THE MATCH, BLACK JACK OLD CHAP. MUST BE RUNNING, YOU KNOW...

THERE. HOW'S MY DISGUISE?

"A PAIR OF SIMPLE EYEGLASSES...?"

MORE THAN ADEQUATE, CLIVE. WE'VE SPENT MONTHS ESTABLISHING YOUR CREDIBILITY WITH VELCRO.

BUT GOOD LUCK, JUST THE SAME...

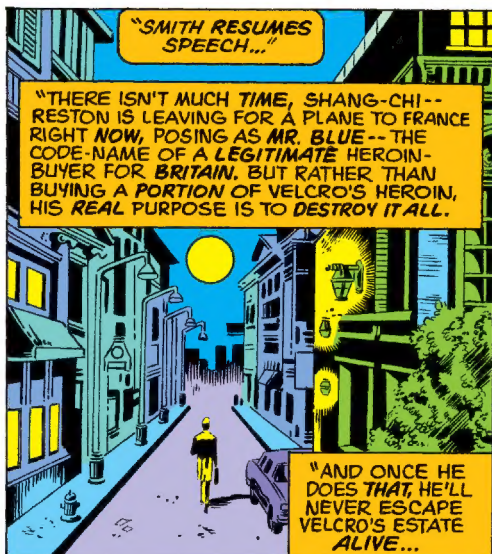
ANYWAY, AS MY FATHER WAS WONT TO SAY, "LIVE AND LET LIVE"-- OR DIE, AS THE CASE MAY BE.



YES... JUST THE SAME...

WELL, I HOPE TO SEE YOU IN FRANCE, SHANG-CHI. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN...

... AND ONCE I PENETRATE VELCRO'S ESTATE, I'LL NEED A GOOD MAN MORE THAN GOOD LUCK.



"SMITH RESUMES SPEECH..."

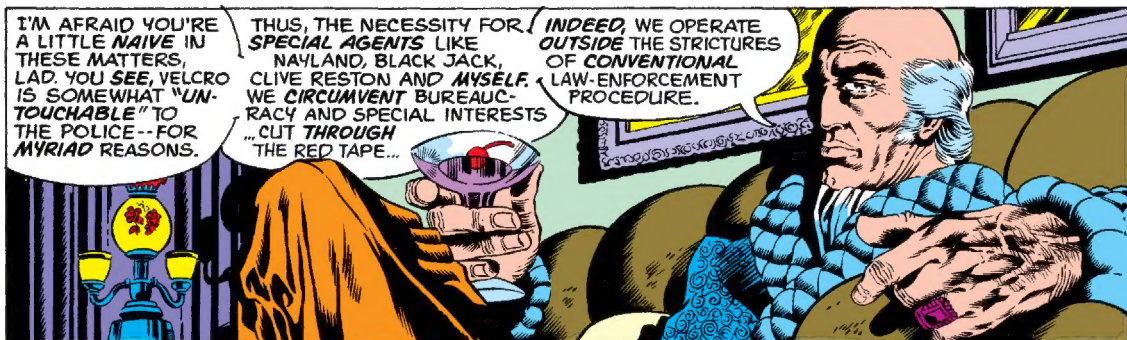
"THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME, SHANG-CHI-- RESTON IS LEAVING FOR A PLANE TO FRANCE RIGHT NOW, POSING AS MR. BLUE-- THE CODE-NAME OF A LEGITIMATE HEROIN-BUYER FOR BRITAIN. BUT RATHER THAN BUYING A PORTION OF VELCRO'S HEROIN, HIS REAL PURPOSE IS TO DESTROY IT ALL.

"AND ONCE HE DOES THAT, HE'LL NEVER ESCAPE VELCRO'S ESTATE ALIVE..."



... UNLESS WE HELP HIM OUT.

BUT WHY HAVE THE AUTHORITIES NOT CONFISCATED THIS HEROIN?



I'M AFRAID YOU'RE A LITTLE NAIVE IN THESE MATTERS, LAD. YOU SEE, VELCRO IS SOMEWHAT "UNTOUCHABLE" TO THE POLICE--FOR MYRIAD REASONS.

THUS, THE NECESSITY FOR SPECIAL AGENTS LIKE NAYLAND, BLACK JACK, CLIVE RESTON AND MYSELF. WE CIRCUMVENT BUREAUCRACY AND SPECIAL INTERESTS ... CUT THROUGH THE RED TAPE...

INDEED, WE OPERATE OUTSIDE THE STRICTURES OF CONVENTIONAL LAW-ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE.



IN SHORT, CHINAMAN...

... WE PLAY JUST AS DIRTY AS THE BAD GUYS.



AS MUCH AS BLACK JACK'S SUCCINCT APPRAISAL SEEMS TO GO AGAINST YOUR PRINCIPLES, SHANG-CHI, I THINK IT'S TIME YOU TOOK A LOOK AT THE REALITIES OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD YOU'VE ENDEAVORED TO STUDY!

ONE ROAD LEADS TO AIMLESS WANDERING. IT'S AN EASY ROAD, AND PROBABLY THE ONE YOU'D PREFER.

THE OTHER ROAD IS MORE ROCKY, AND POINTS TO DIRECTION. ON IT, YOU'LL OFTEN HAVE TO STRIKE THE FIRST BLOW AND CLOSE YOUR EYES TO TECHNICALITIES OF JUSTICE IN ORDER TO FACILITATE DEEPER JUSTICE!

PLAYING THE PACIFIST UNTIL YOU'RE SLAPPED IN THE FACE IS ALL VERY WELL AND GOOD, BUT YOU'VE COME TO A CROSSROADS NOW...

IT'S MY ROAD LAD... AND IT'S A DIRTY ONE. WILL YOU JOIN ME ON IT?



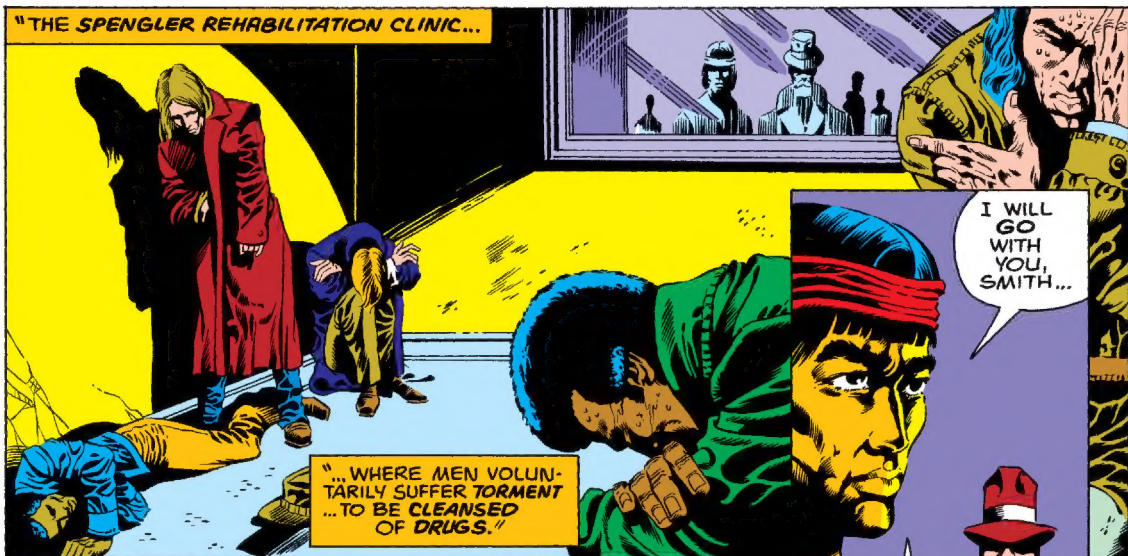
BUT IS THERE NOT A PATH IN THE MIDDLE, WHERE I MAY WORK FOR JUSTICE... WITHOUT BECOMING DIRTY?

NOT WHEN YOU FACE FILTH LIKE VELCRO.

YOU'VE HELPED ME IN THE PAST, SHANG-CHI-- INVALUABLY. NOW I'M ASKING YOU TO MAKE IT OFFICIAL-- TO BECOME ONE OF MY AGENTS, AND SHARE FULLY WITH BLACK JACK AND RESTON THE TASK OF PERFORMING MY DIRTY WORK.

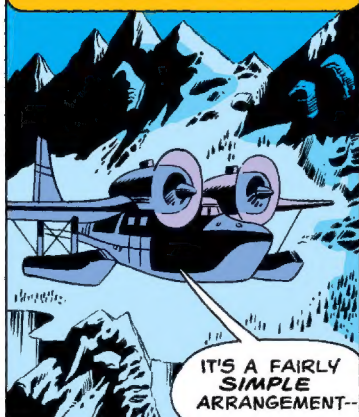
BUT BEFORE YOU GIVE ME AN ANSWER, I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING. I WANT TO SHOW YOU THE LEGACIES LEFT BY MEN LIKE VELCRO. I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME TO--

"THE SPENGLER REHABILITATION CLINIC..."

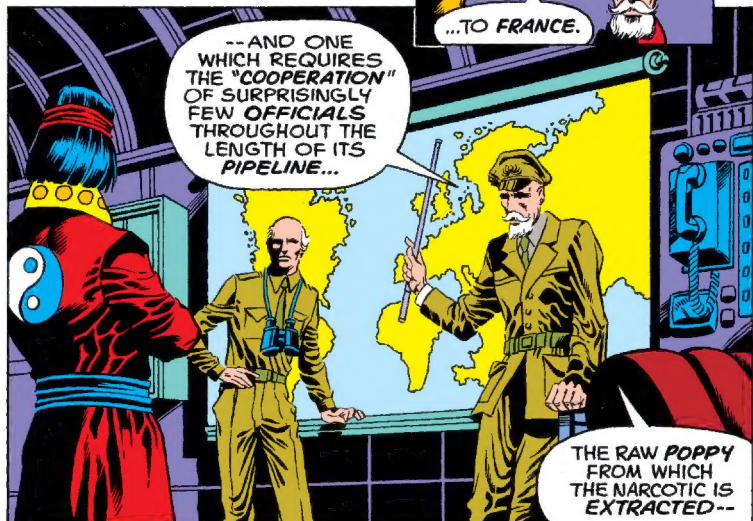


"... WHERE MEN VOLUNTARILY SUFFER TORMENT ...TO BE CLEANSED OF DRUGS."

"WAITING FOR OUR ARRIVAL IN MARSEILLES, THE SEAPLANE NOW TRANSPORTS US TOWARD A GROTTO NEAR SÈTE, IN THE GULF OF LIONS..."



IT'S A FAIRLY SIMPLE ARRANGEMENT--



--AND ONE WHICH REQUIRES THE "COOPERATION" OF SURPRISINGLY FEW OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH OF ITS PIPELINE...

...TO FRANCE.

THE RAW POPPY FROM WHICH THE NARCOTIC IS EXTRACTED--

-- IS HARVESTED HERE, IN TURKEY...



... AND THEN BROUGHT ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN TO VELCRO'S ESTATE FOR PROCESSING IN HIS LABS.



THE REFINED HEROIN IS THEN TRANSPORTED BY SHIP THROUGH THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR AND ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN--

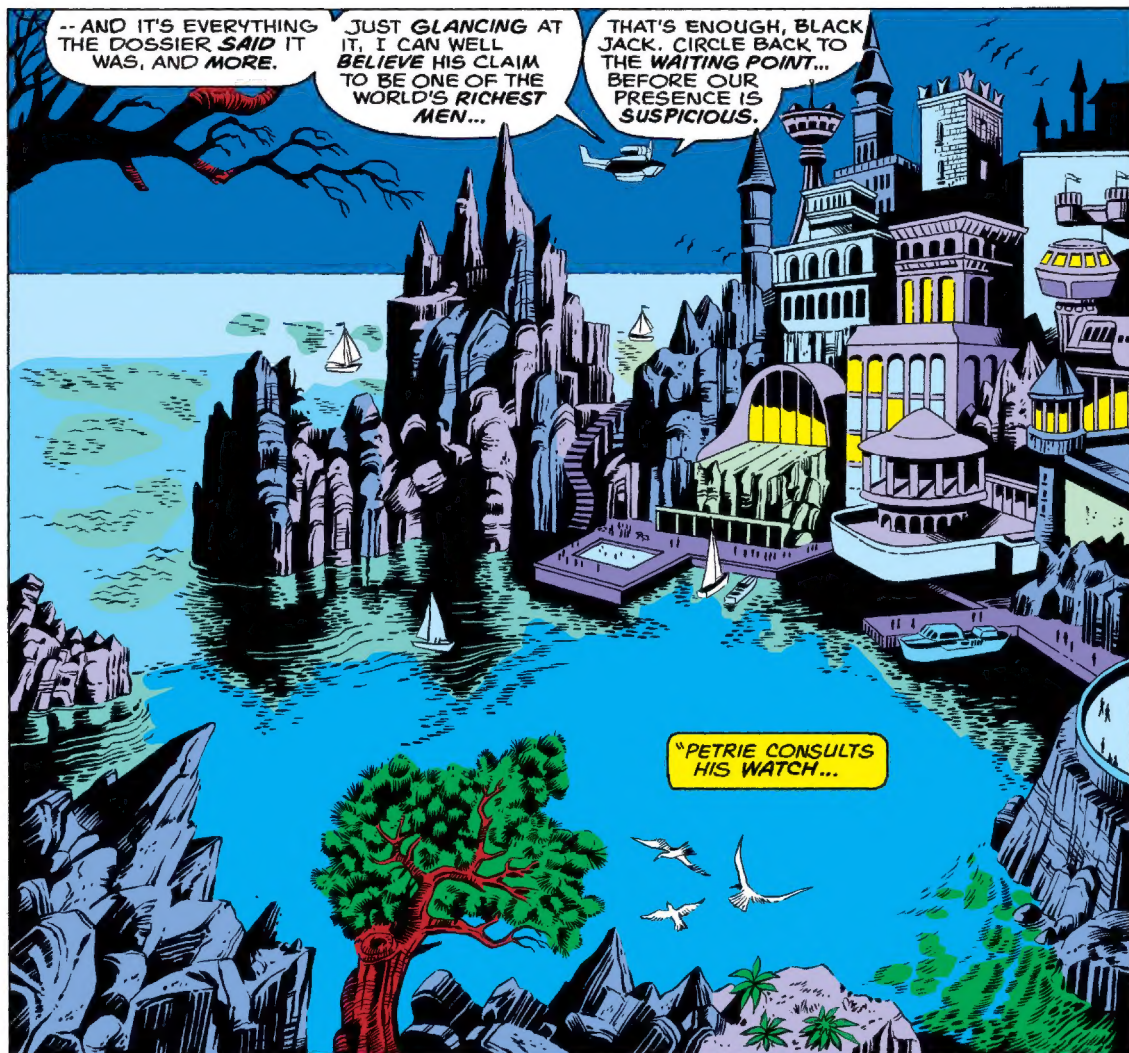


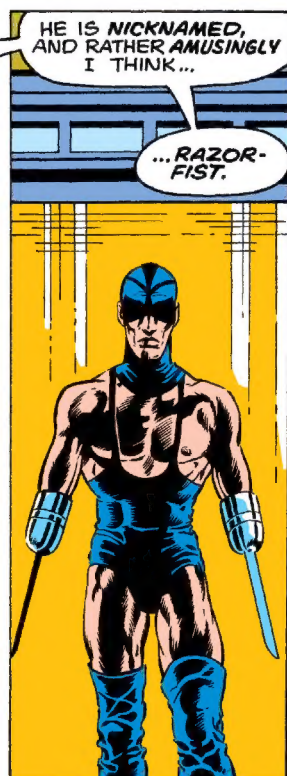
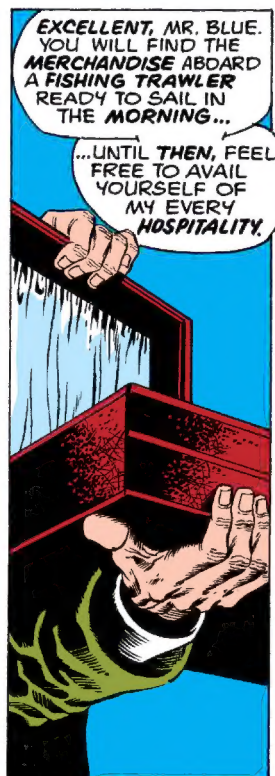
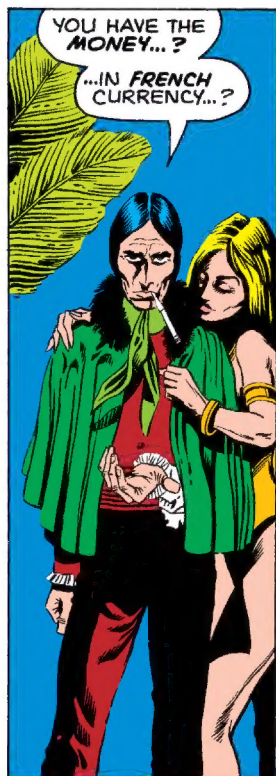
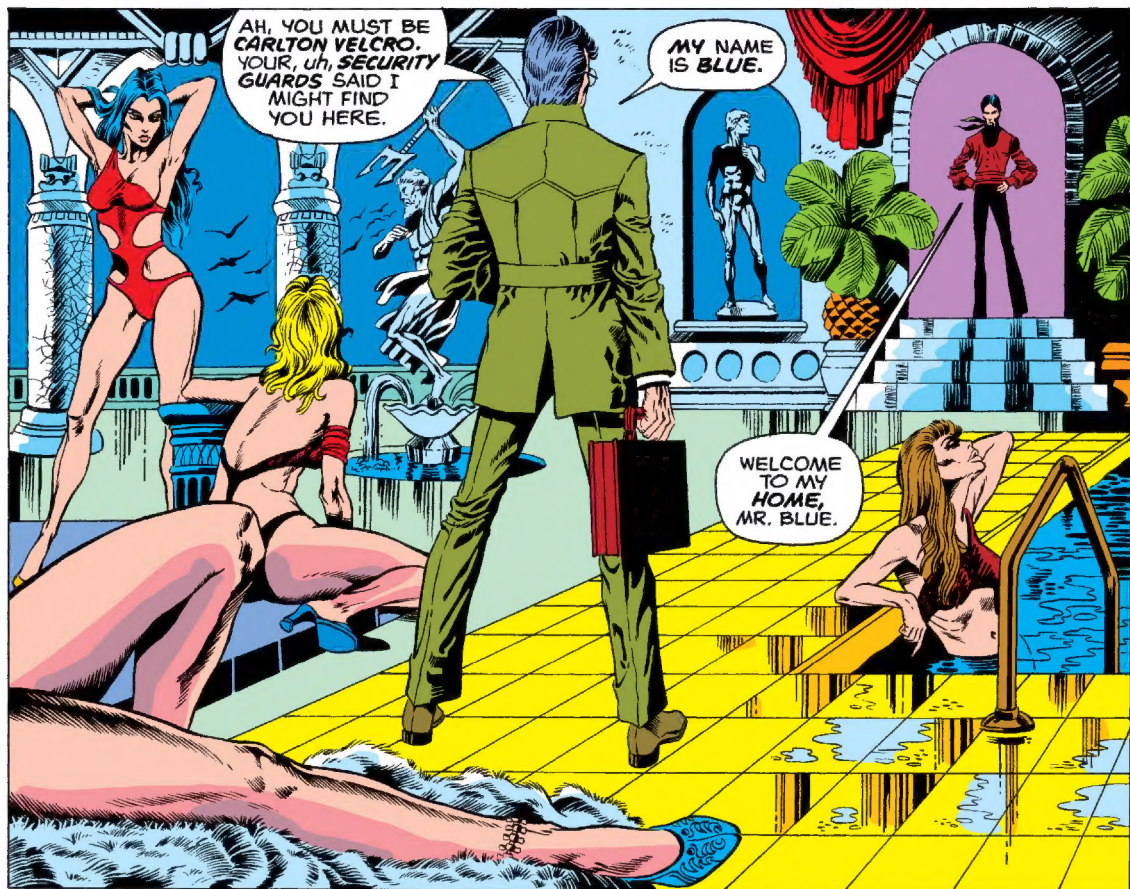
--TO SOUTH AMERICA OR EVEN MEXICO, WHERE SMALLER FISH SMUGGLE IT INTO THE STATES BY LAND. AS YOU CAN SEE, IT--

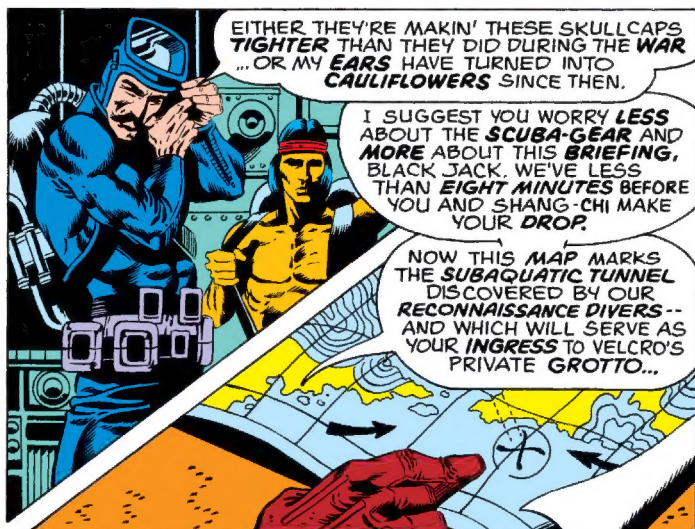
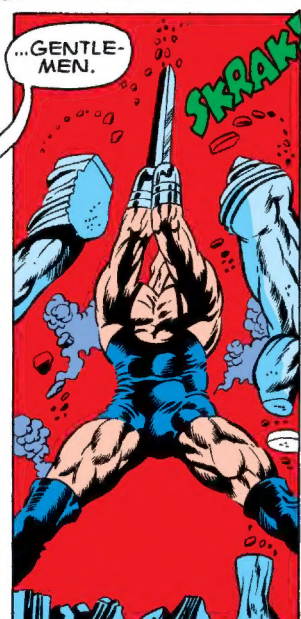
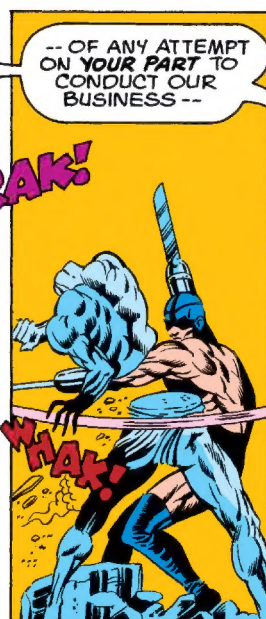
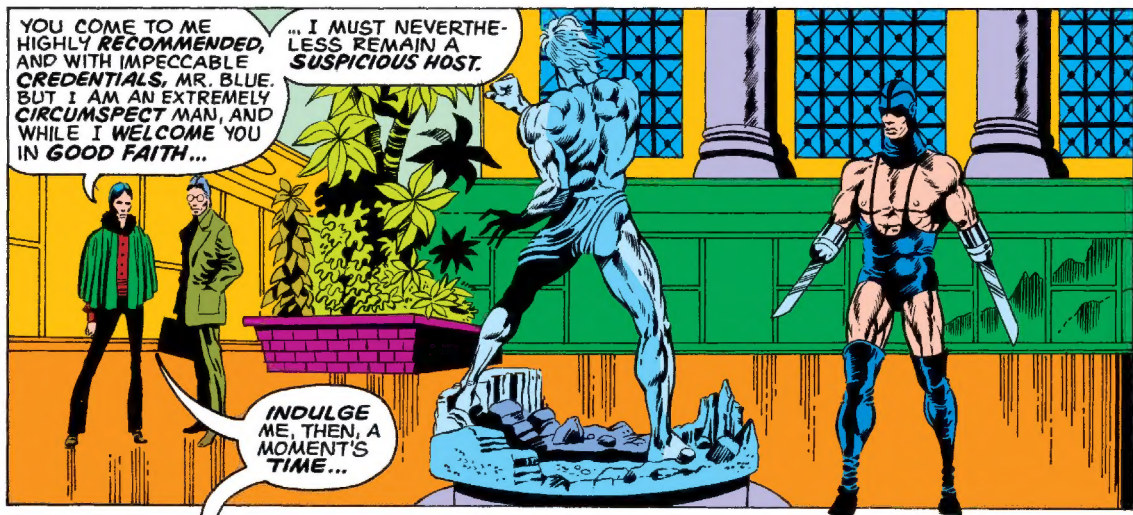


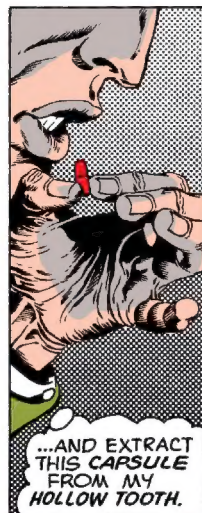
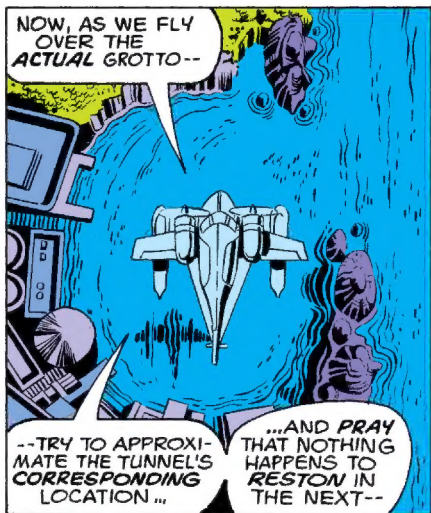
WE'RE COMIN' OVER THE GROTTO, SIR DENIS--!

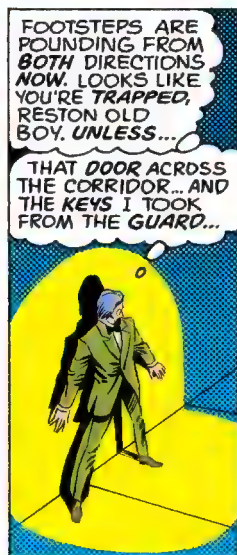
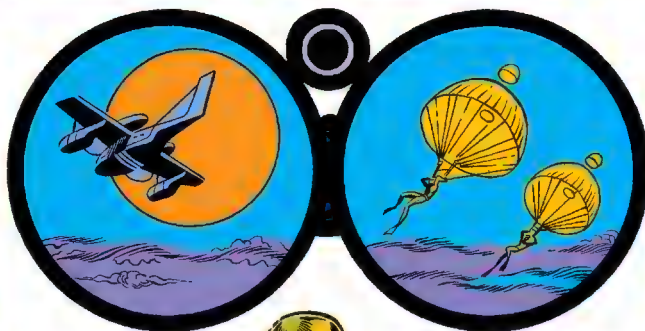
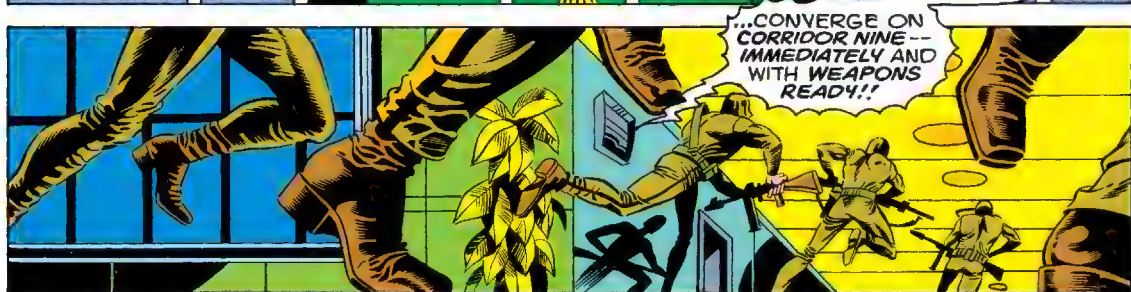
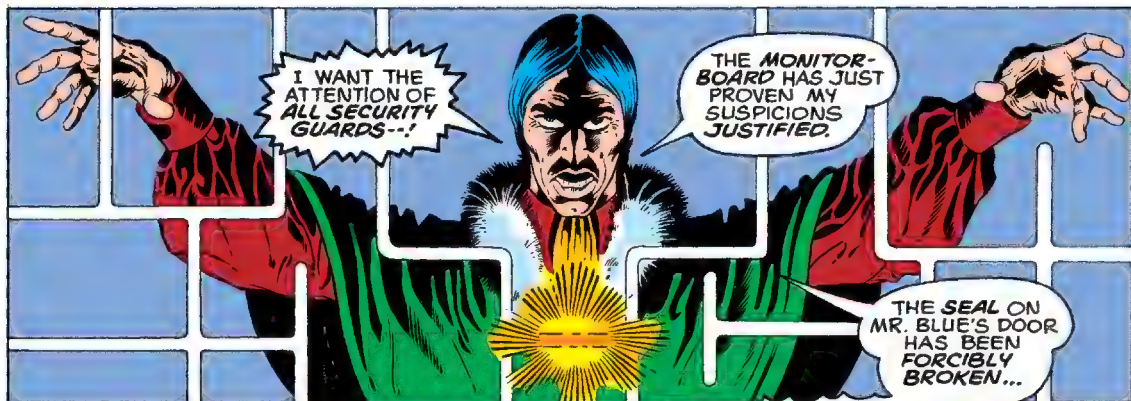


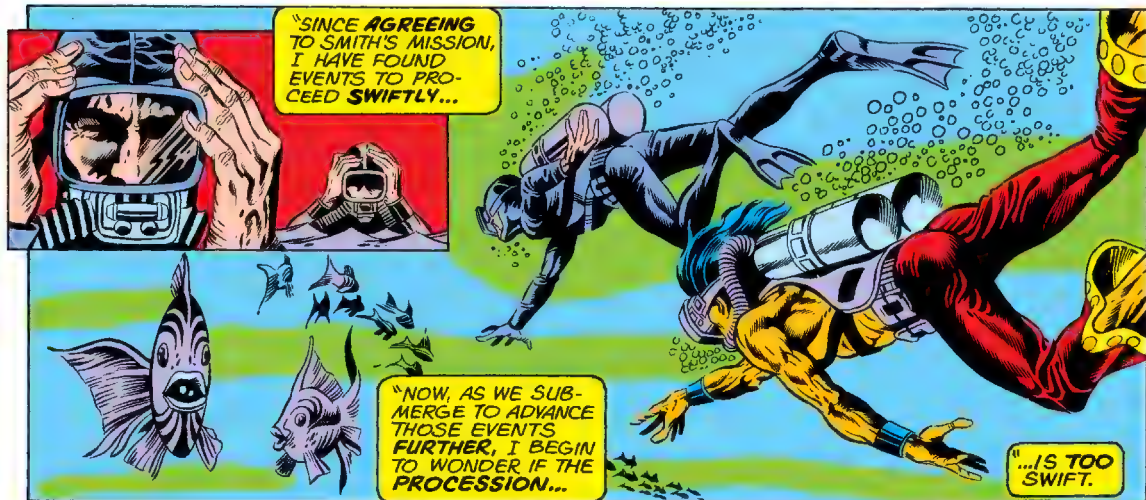
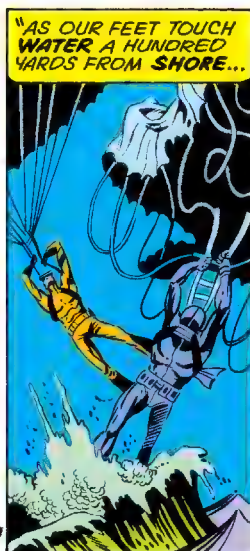


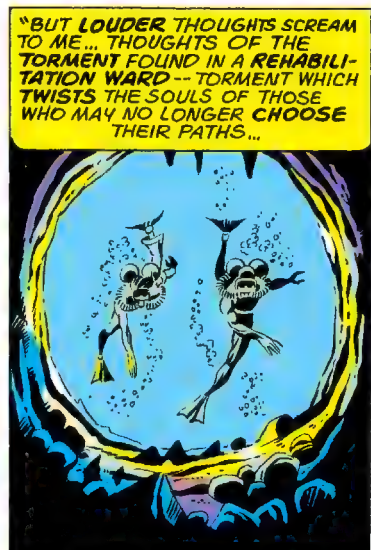
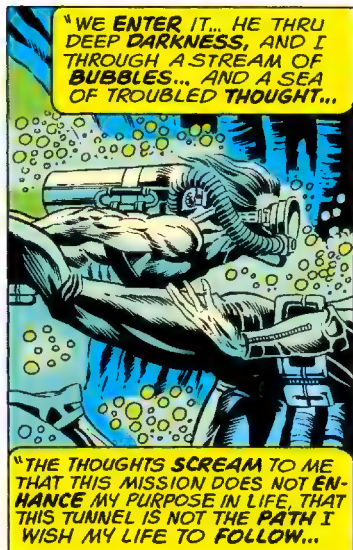


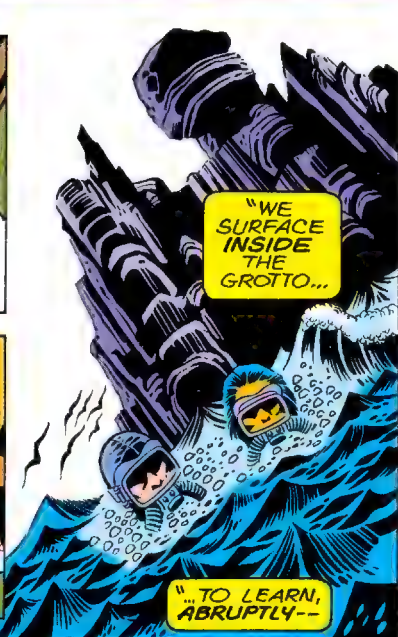
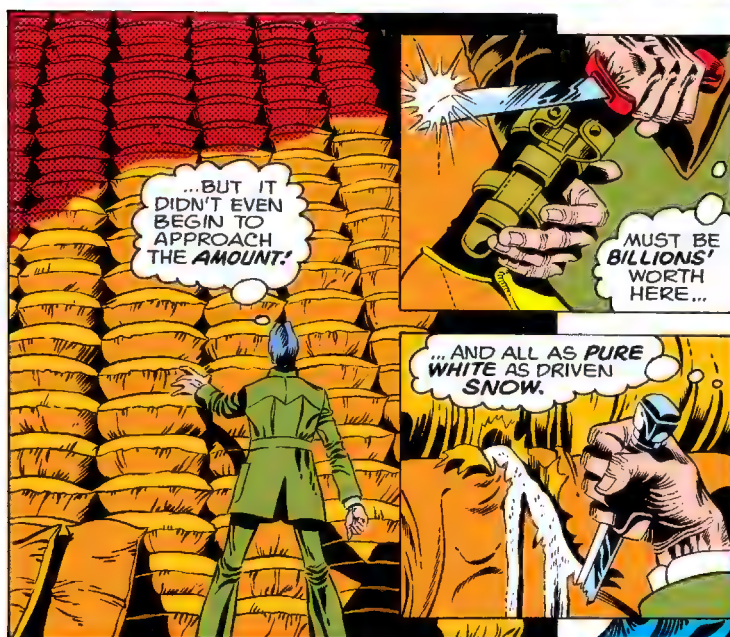
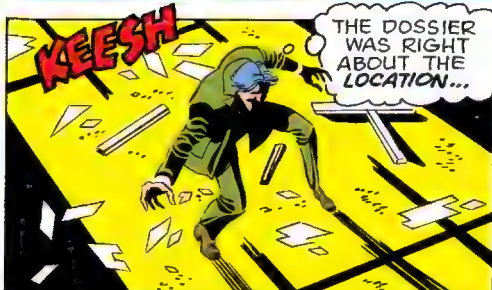
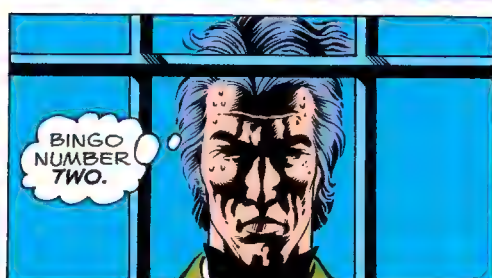
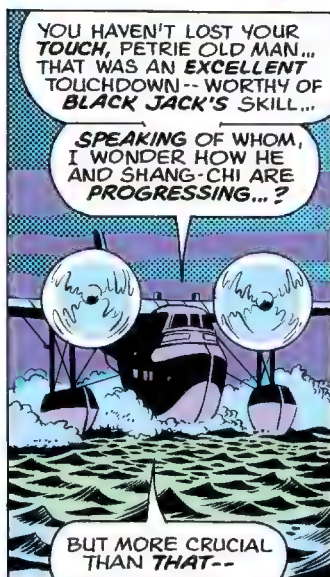












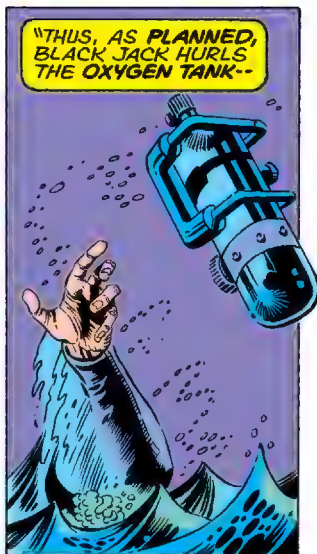


"-- THAT DEATH HAS EAGERLY AWAITED US.



"WE SUBMERGE AGAIN, RAPIDLY.

"BUT THE WATER WILL ONLY HIDE US, AND CANNOT SERVE AS A BUFFER TO THEIR FURIOUS BULLETS...



"THUS, AS PLANNED, BLACK JACK HURLS THE OXYGEN TANK--



"-- WHICH IS ACTUALLY A CONCUSSION BOMB.

"I DO NOT LIKE THIS FORM OF FIGHTING, EVEN THOUGH I HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY ASSURED IT IS NECESSARY...

COME ON, CHINAMAN! RESTON'S DUE TO GET HIMSELF INTO TROUBLE ANY MINUTE NOW...

... AND WE'VE GOT TO BE THERE TO SCRAPE HIM OUT OF IT!

"IS DEATH... EVER NECESSARY?"

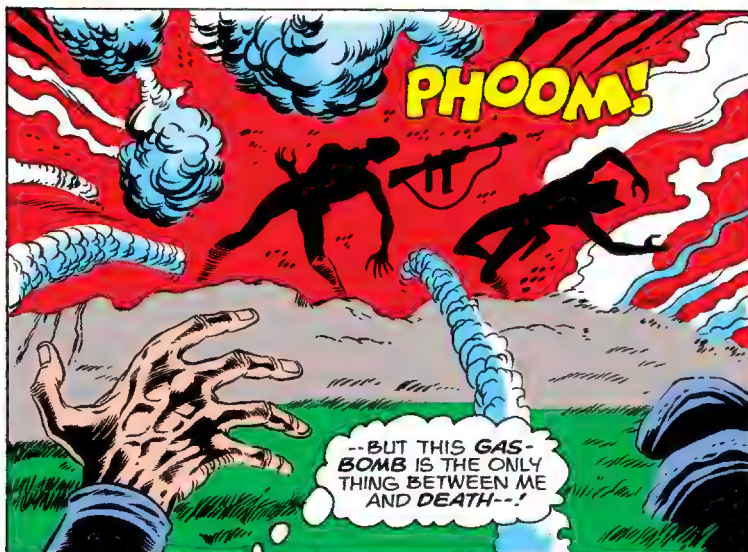
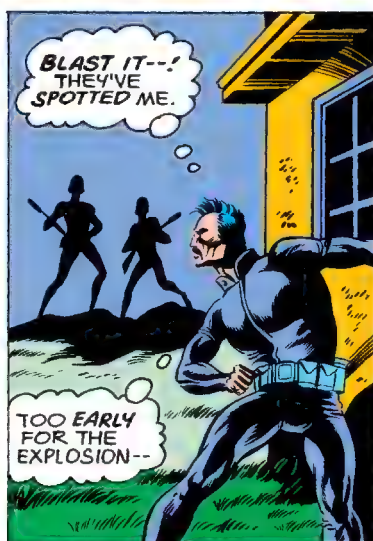


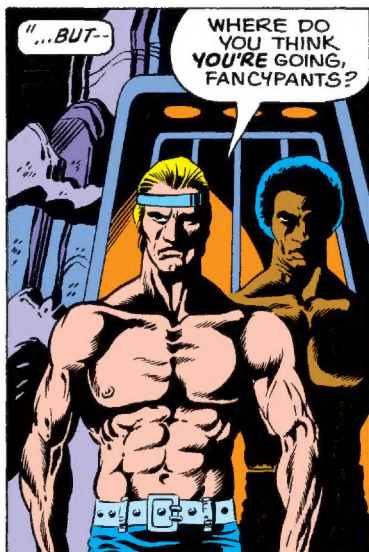
"THE SURF IS ANGRY AT OUR FEET..."

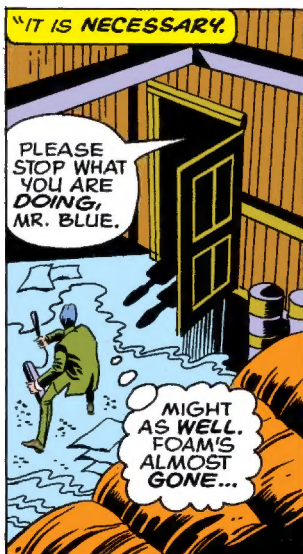


--IN THE STOREROOM NOW, YOU INCOMPOTENT IDIOTS!! DO I HAVE TO SEND MY PERSONAL BODYGUARDS TO STOP HIM--???

"... AND A LOUD-SPEAKER'S ANGRY WORDS BOOM ACROSS THE GROUNDS.



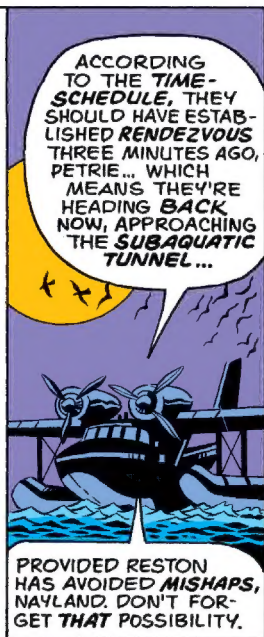






INDEED, YOUR GREED IS REPUGNANT TO ME... PARTICULARLY SINCE IT DOES NOT DERIVE FROM GENUINE HUNGER... BUT RATHER A BASE DESTRUCTIVE URGE.

THAT URGE MAY WELL PROVE TO BE YOUR DESTRUCTION, MR. BLUE. UNLESS--



ACCORDING TO THE TIME-SCHEDULE, THEY SHOULD HAVE ESTABLISHED RENDEZVOUS THREE MINUTES AGO, PETRIE... WHICH MEANS THEY'RE HEADING BACK NOW, APPROACHING THE SUBAQUATIC TUNNEL...

PROVIDED RESTON HAS AVOIDED MISHAPS, NAYLAND. DON'T FORGET THAT POSSIBILITY.



-- YOU AGREE TO TELL ME YOUR REAL NAME, MR. BLUE... AND THAT OF YOUR EMPLOYER..

VERY WELL, VELCRO. I'VE NO OTHER CHOICE. I'M REALLY MICKEY MOUSE-- SENT BY PIGGLY WIGGLY.

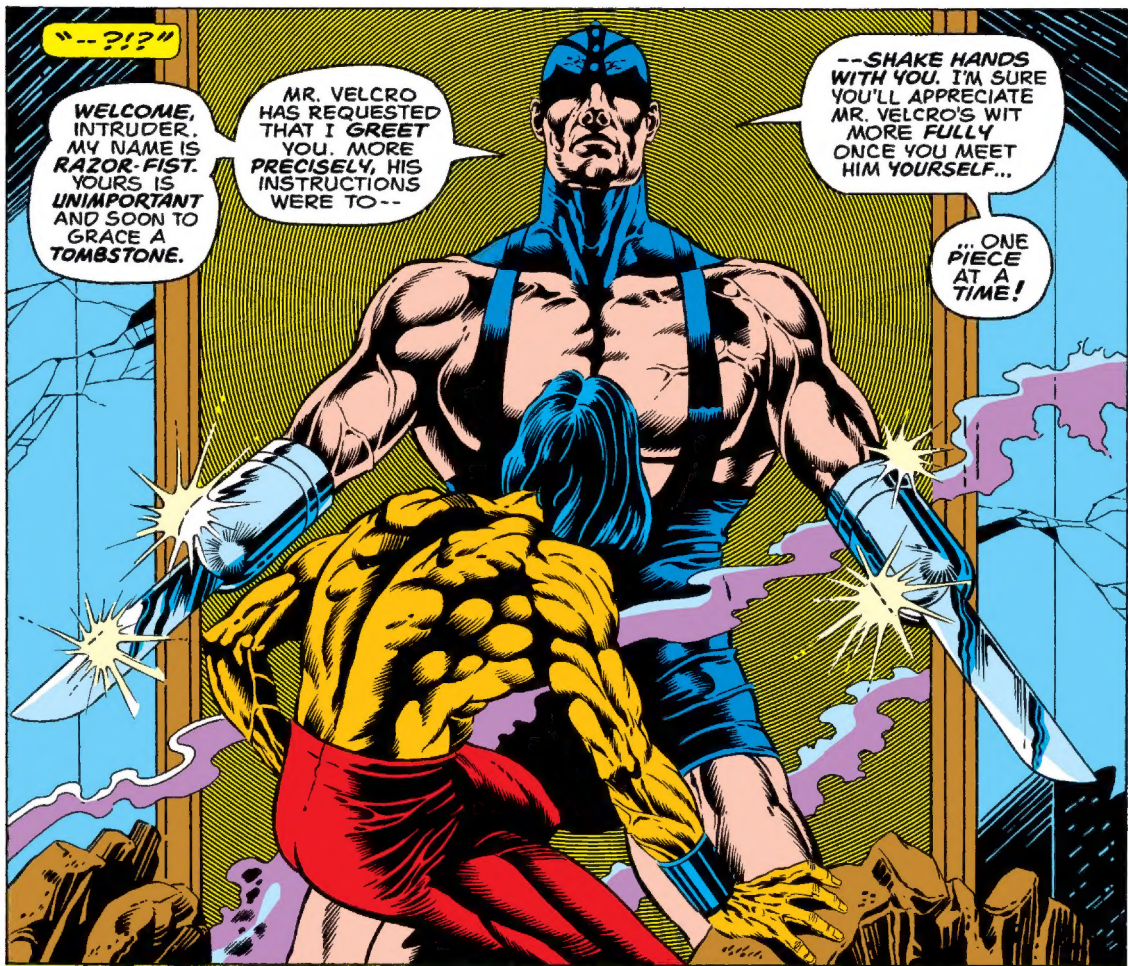
A PITY, MR. MOUSE, THAT YOU MUST LEARN FIRST-HAND OF MY PANTHERS' MOST GENUINE HUNGER.



"INSIDE."

KRATCH!

"INSIDE I WILL FIND--



"--?!?"

WELCOME, INTRUDER. MY NAME IS RAZOR-FIST. YOURS IS UNIMPORTANT AND SOON TO GRACE A TOMBSTONE.

MR. VELCRO HAS REQUESTED THAT I GREET YOU. MORE PRECISELY, HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO--

--SHAKE HANDS WITH YOU. I'M SURE YOU'LL APPRECIATE MR. VELCRO'S WIT MORE FULLY ONCE YOU MEET HIM YOURSELF..

... ONE PIECE AT A TIME!

NEXT ISSUE:

PHASE TWO BLASTS WIDE OPEN IN --

SNOWBUSTER!

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

9/0 MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Marvel,

The four tall men slowly encircled me, all bearing sharp knives in their left hands. I turned around swiftly, looking each of them in the eyes. I snapped into my appropriate fighting stance, ready for a fight for self-preservation. One man lunged toward me; one block, three snaps and a wheel kick did him in.

The two men behind me sprang into the air, hoping to land their knives in the middle of my back. I ducked, then smashed my fist into one man's stomach and gave a roundhouse kick to the other's jaw. One man remained, the biggest of the four. We stared at each other, and eternity seemed to fall upon us, until he took the offense. Four unsuccessful side kicks were unleashed at me. I retaliated with a snap kick, a claw, right hook, a wheel kick, three side kicks, and after pivoting a back kick.

Three unconscious men lay at my feet, the fourth man most likely dead. Then, after stepping over the limp bodies I grabbed the last issue of MASTER OF KUNG-FU off the newsstand and paid for it. Walking home, I reminisced about the days when you didn't have to work so hard just to buy a comic book.

Issue # 25 had a beautiful cover with the attractive blue sky and Shang-Chi tackling the white cavemen. Then, when I read the issue and thought about it, I looked back at the cover. Those "cavemen" weren't what they seemed. They were black natives in the story. Please try to be consistent with your covers and their related stories.

As for the story, Doug Moench did an excellent job. I always feel Doug tries to make his stories have symbolic, philosophical and exciting details.

I'm going to give Paul Gulacy some more time before I begin criticizing or complimenting his art. I look at some of his work and it's fantastic, but the splash page for this issue turned me off. So I'm going to wait and see how he does in future issues.

Doug Gratz
805 W. Centennial
Muncie, IN 47303

Dear Marvel Armadillos:

MASTER OF KUNG FU #26 probably came the closest of any issue yet to capturing the spirit of the original Rohmer novels, starting right from the eerie description in words and picture of Fu Manchu's not-quite-human daughter at the story's beginning. Here we have the traditional setting for this kind of tale: the unknown foreign city where nightmares come to life; where hooded menaces lurk; where ancient evils hide, about to reemerge; where men may lose their reason and will; and where men who deny the power of evil—like Greville—defy warnings at their own peril.

There's a sense in this story of a cycle of evil repeating itself, over and over, with the ring, Fu Manchu, Sir Denis, Fah Lo Suee, the dead pharaoh and the rubies all returning to trap Greville as his father was once trapped. At the end, the cycle begins anew, with the heroes and villains heading for their next battle, leaving Greville's corpse behind.

All of this is evoked quite well, but the story still has

flaws. For one, I wish Sir Denis would do more to earn his reputation as Fu Manchu's foremost adversary than merely acting as Shang-Chi's tour guide and wandering about in bafflement when S-C goes off fighting.

Second, although Fah Lo Suee's hypnotic powers contribute greatly to the story's atmosphere, as currently presented they work better as a plot device in a novel than in comics. In prose descriptions, FLS's eyes probably seem so mysteriously alluring that one easily accepts their powers as real. But when you actually see those eyes in a comic, they look pretty, but that's it. Since she lacks Dracula's supernatural powers, and even the "swirling gold flecks" in her other fellow hypnotist's (Doc Savage's) eyes, how can we believe she can paralyze a strong-minded fellow like Sir Denis just by looking at him?

Yet these are really only minor flaws in a good story. I think MASTER OF KUNG FU functions better in the style of the Fu Manchu books than in the mode of the typical kung fu epic, and I think this story proves it.

Peter Sanderson
27 Gov. Belcher Lane
Milton, MA 02186



Dear Masters of Kung Fu:

In issue # 23 of MASTER OF KUNG FU, letters page, Clyde Talley asks Doug Moench to answer some questions he thinks readers would like to know. Well, I can answer them.

- 1) How does he support himself? Nayland Smith supports him.
- 2) Where does he live? In New York Park. In issue #16 he says, and I quote: "This park is my home now, since I left the abode of my father, the mandarin Fu Manchu."
- 3) Has he any cash? Yes.
- 4) If so, where does it come from? In MOKF #22 he says, I quote again: "I have filled the day with labor, filling a truck with crates".

I hope this letter gets printed.

Bob Rempel
2524 E. 98th Way
Thornton, CO 80229

Your letters this time around don't leave much for us to say. Just the same, Doug, Paul and all involved (including the anonymous armadillo writing this) appreciate your comments, and look forward to receiving more of same. You won't (*ahem*) let us down?

We didn't think so!